

Where can I get more information about Clostridium difficile?



Health Protection Scotland
www.hps.scot.nhs.uk



The Health Protection Agency
www.hpa.org.uk



NHS Inform
www.nhsinform.co.uk



NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/public-health/infection-prevention-and-control/

Further advice can be obtained by contacting the local infection control team. Leaflets are available in other languages and in large print version from the following website:



www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/public-health/infection-prevention-and-control/
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Some facts about

Clostridium difficile

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What is *Clostridium difficile*?

Clostridium difficile are bacteria (germs) that can cause an infection in the bowel which may result in diarrhoea. *Clostridium difficile* can cause infection in hospital patients, especially the elderly. Infection usually occurs in patients who have received recent antibiotic therapy. Antibiotics change the normal bacteria in the bowel, allowing ***Clostridium difficile*** to multiply and cause diarrhoea.

What type of illness does it cause?

Diarrhoea is the most common symptom but stomach pains and fever may also occur.

For most people this is a mild but uncomfortable illness and they will make a full recovery. Some people can become ill as diarrhoea can cause dehydration. Occasionally some people can become more seriously unwell when not treated early.

How do you diagnose the illness?

We will send a sample of diarrhoea to the laboratory for testing, if we suspect ***Clostridium difficile***. If a positive diagnosis is confirmed, we will not take further samples unless diarrhoea starts again after you complete your treatment.

How do we treat *Clostridium difficile*?

If possible, we will give you a course of antibiotics to treat the infection. Occasionally the infection can return (a relapse) and we may give alternative treatment.

How do we control the spread of *Clostridium difficile* in hospital?

The most effective way to prevent the bacteria from spreading is by hand washing, using soap and water before and after contact with the patient or client and their environment. Alcohol gel alone does not remove ***Clostridium difficile*** from your hands. Staff and patients should always wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff should offer those who are bedbound hand washing facilities. Staff within hospitals will wear disposable gloves and aprons when caring for infected patients. Thorough cleaning is an important means of removing the germs from the environment. Generally, we place patients with ***Clostridium difficile*** in a single room.

Can *Clostridium difficile* affect my family and friends?

This is unlikely if they follow basic hygiene measures, e.g. hand washing and cleaning of the environment.

How can this infection be prevented?

The key to preventing and controlling the spread of this infection is the sensible use of antibiotics, good hand hygiene, and a clean environment.